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ABSTRACT

A detailed analysis of an Italian-American woman's speech is presented, and her interlanguage patterns are discussed in relation to a pidginization hypothesis. Data are presented on the following speech characteristics of the woman: free speech negatives, interrogatives, and present and past tense constructions. Her language is shown to be fossilized and also pidginized in the sense that is represents secondary hybridization. It is maintained that secondary hybridization (the interlanguage resulting from communication between second language learners and target language speakers) is legitimate pidginization. The impact that social and psychological factors played in the woman's speech when she first came to America and during the last 15 to 20 years is analyzed. (SW)

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ENGLISH/ITALIAN SECONDARY HYBRIDIZATION
A CASE STUDY OF THE PIDGINIZATION OF A SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER'S SPEECH

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In recent years, within the framework of research in second language acquisition (SLA), an interest has developed in incomplete linguistic competences. Typically a researcher in SLA selects one or more subjects who are just beginning to acquire a second language and then gathers speech samples from the subject(s) at regular intervals, often for a period of as long as two years. The goal of such research is to trace the course of acquisition from its earliest stages until final conformity with the target language. However, in several instances the subject's acquisition has not progressed beyond the most rudimentary stages of development. This phenomenon motivated researchers to account for the subject's low level of achievement. It was thought that by accounting for a lack of success in SLA, we might be better able to explain what is involved in successful SLA.

Schumann (1975, in press) reports a case study of a 33 year old Costa Rican, Alberto, who when compared with five other subjects evidenced remarkably little linguistic development in the ten months during which he was studied. His speech can be characterized as a reduced and simplified form of English

a. in which the negative particle is placed before the whole verb and is not placed after the first auxiliary element as in well-formed English
   I no can see.
   I didn't can see.
b. in which inversion is virtually absent in questions
   You hear the tape?
   Where you live, Bill?
c. in which no auxiliaries (except possibly <u>is</u> copula) can be said to be acquired
d. in which the possessive tends to be unmarked
   The king food a piece of chicken. (= The king's food is a piece of chicken.)
   What you change the position the man, the arm (= position of the man's arm)
e. in which the regular past tense ending (ed) is virtually absent
f. and in which the progressive morpheme (-ing) is supplied only about 60% of the time. (Schumann, in press)

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Schumann further characterizes Alberto's speech as "pidginized" because its reduced and simplified form resembles that found in certain types of pidginized languages. In addition the social conditions in which Alberto lived were in many ways similar to pidginogenic social contexts. Alberto had little need or desire to improve his English because he was socially and psychologically distant from native speakers of English. His social distance resulted largely from his "ghettoized" existence and his psychological distance resulted from his lack of personal motivation to get to know and speak with native English speakers. (see Schumann 1975a, 1975b, 1976).

The present case study reports on the interlanguage of another second language learner whose English speech is strikingly similar to Alberto's. A detailed analysis of her speech is presented and then her interlanguage is discussed in relation to

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the "pidginization" hypothesis.

Personal History

My informant, who I will refer to as Angela, was born in Italy in 1899. She came to America when she was 37 years old. She lived in New York from 1937 to 1960 and in 1960 she moved to California. She returned to Italy once, in 1954, for a six month visit. She has had no formal training in English either in Italy or in the United States. She went to school up until the second grade in Italy. She reads and writes Italian quite well and she can read a little English. (i.e. She can pick sale coupons out of the paper; she can read greeting cards.)

When she first moved to New York she lived on 95th Avenue and 143rd Street. It was an all-Italian neighborhood. After four years the family moved to an ethnically-mixed neighborhood, 87th Road and Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, where she began to have non-Italian friends. She has always been a homemaker so that her contact with English has come mainly from these non-Italian friends and her dealings with storekeepers, etc. Her family all speak Italian with the exception of some grandchildren (who do understand some Italian) and new members of the family such as the husbands and wives of grandchildren.

Her move to California has brought her into contact with more English-speaking people. Seven years ago she became involved with a women's club which is affiliated with the church. For the last two years she has attended senior citizens' meetings. This has made it possible and mandatory for Angela to use her English more frequently than she had done so previously. She lives with her daughter and her family. Both English and Italian are spoken in the home. Angela has a very good receptive competence of English.

1. Free Speech Negatives

Angela's negatives fall into four classes; no V, don't V, can't V (V=verb) and other (never, nothing). There were 98 don't V negatives. Ninety-seven of these were don't know, the other one was don't care. Don't V will be excluded from the percentage count since it exists as a learned phrase - don't know- in Angela's language inventory. It does not show acquisition of the negative structure.

The no V category is by far the largest of the four. It comprises 78% (180/232) of the negatives used by Angela.

You no do good.
The husband no come.
He no wanna kill the wife.

I think that it can be said that Angela is mainly in the no V negative stage with the occasional use of can't V. Twenty-one percent (21%) (49/232) of the negatives Angela used are of the form can't V.

I can't tell you.
I can't talk to you.
I can't sell.

The other category of negatives includes never V. This category accounts for 1% (3/232) of the negatives used.

Angela uses another negative which forms a category all its own. This is the negative word ne. The data shows that no substitutes for not. Ne is also used as a substitute for not. The negative not appears very infrequently and only in special positions.

I don't know si win or not. (si=if)
I don't know si go or not.
I no remember si have heat or not.
I hopa not.

Not appears only in sentence final position. Angela substitutes both no and ne for not in other than sentence final position.

Ma think I dream cause Uncle Dan ne here.
She'sa ne real mother.
She say ne over there.
Oh, no, Tom no over here.
She's no good for you.

Ne substitutes for not 59% (13/22) of the time, excluding sentence final position. No substitutes for not 41% (9/22) of the time, again excluding sentence final position. Only no substitutes for not before the word yet. The combination of ne + the semi-vowel y would make the phrase ne yet unlikely. Ne could be the contraction of the Italian negative plus the copula - non è. Ne does occur, however, where the English contracted copula is present. It would seem that ne and no are in free variation as substitutes for not in all but sentence final position and before yet.

1.1. Elicited Negatives

In elicited speech Angela uses the correct negative only 2% (2/95) of the time.

IT CAN GO FAST.
It can't go fast.

I ALWAYS WATCH T.V.
I never watch T.V.

As was seen in the discussion of free speech negatives, Angela uses the never V form. She knows that the negative of always is never. The rest of the elicited negatives are consistently no V. Combining free and elicited negatives, Angela used the negative correctly only 16% (52/327) of the time. The correct negatives were always of the form can't V and never V.

2. Interrogatives

The discussion of interrogatives will be divided into yes/no questions, wh-questions and wh-embedded questions. Free and elicited interrogatives will be discussed together.

2.1 Yes/No Questions

None (0/36) of Angela's yes/no questions were inverted. Intonation is used to denote that the sentence is a yes/no question. Her yes/no questions also lack do-support.

You wanna something?
You likea the work here?
Ma this he tell me es really true?

2.2 Wh-questions

Of all of Angela's free speech questions the only ones

which were inverted were

Who's this?
How are you?

I consider both of these questions to be chunk-learned phrases, similar to don't know and, therefore, not true examples of inverted questions.

Forty-five (45) of Angela's wh-questions were introduced by the word whadda. In looking at whadda one would suppose that it is the result of the slurring of what+do. Many English speakers slur these words and the result is similar in sound to the word whadda. If this were the case with Angela, it could be said that she had performed do-insertion and auxiliary inversion. If we examine the 45 whadda sentences, however, we will see that this is not the case.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) (12/45) of these sentences were the question

Whadda you call?

I would consider this a filler sentence, one used when a name could not be recalled. It is a chunk-learned sentence, similar to How are you?. Subtracting these 12 sentences, there are 33 whadda sentences left to deal with. Fifty-eight percent (58%) (19/33) of the sentences convey the meaning what+do.

Whadda you say si I call you?
Whadda you know?
Whadda you want?

Twelve percent (12%) (4/33) of the sentences convey the meaning how.

Whadda you feel? (= How do you feel?)
Whadda you fix that pipe? (= How did you fix that pipe?)

Six percent (6%) (2/33) of the sentences convey the meaning where.

Whadda you live? (= Where do you live?)
Whadda you put my shoes? (= Where did you put my shoes?)

Six percent (6%) (2/33) of the questions convey the meaning what.

Whadda cold? (= What cold? What do you mean cold?)
Whadda you relation with the man you have?
(= What relation with the man do you have?)

Six percent (6%) (2/33) of the sentences convey the meaning what can.

Whadda ya gotta do? (= What can you do? Used to mean What can you do about her son not being able to attend a certain function.)

Six percent (6%) (2/33) of the sentences convey the meaning what does.

Whadda she want? (= What does she want?)
Whadda gotta do to me? (= What does it have to do with me?)

Six percent (6%) (2/33) of the questions were miscellaneous responses which convey the meaning what is and what are.

Whadda you doone? (= What are you doing?)

Whadda ya gotta be happen for me? (= What is going to happen to me?)

As can be seen from the percentages presented, whadda is used as an overall wh-question word, although its primary use is restricted to what.

Another interesting aspect of whadda is its almost exclusive usage before pronouns. In only 4% (2/45) (including the whadda you call? forms) of the questions do we find whadda preceding a word which is not a pronoun.

Whadda cold?
Whadda gotta . . .?

This observation will take on more significance in the following discussion of what questions.

There were 19 what questions. Thirty-six percent (36%) (7/19) of these were what's questions. Out of these 19 questions, only one was inverted.

What is you favorite food, Anthony?

I am not considering what's questions as questions which exhibit inversion. I believe that what's is also chunk-learned and not the contraction of what+is.

In the remaining 12 what questions, none of the interrogative words appeared before pronouns. Two of the 7 what's appeared before possessive pronouns. It would seem that Angela uses whadda before subject pronouns and what or what's in sentences without these pronouns.

Whadda you gotta say?
Whadda she want?
Whadda I gotta say?

What happen to Norman?
What'sa matter?
What trouble you have?

It is also important to note that how is expressed by what in 5% (1/19) of the sentences.

What go to work everyday? (= How do you go to work everyday?)

2.3 Why questions

Angela correctly uses the why interrogative. It is interesting to note that why only precedes the subject pronoun you. Sixty-eight percent (68%) (11/16) of the why questions were negative questions.

Why you no . . . . ?

As was seen in the whadda-what questions, there is no do-support or inversion in the why questions.

One why question was used to convey the meaning how.

Why you fix that pipe? (= How did you fix that pipe?)

2.4 Where questions

There were only 4 where questions. Fifty percent (50%) of them were used to convey the meaning how.

Where's you headache? (= How's your headache?)

The other two questions were

Where'sa so-e-so?
Where you put my shoes?

The second question was asked twice. Once in the first hour tape and the second time in the third hour tape. The first time the form used was "whadda you put my shoes" in which whadda was used to convey where.

2.5 How questions

There are 9 how questions in the data. In order to better discuss these questions, I will list them.

Oh, how longa?
How are you? (4)
How are you this morning?
Wha-howdaya feel this morning?
Anthony, how old are you?
How go to work everyday?

The first question is an echo question. I had asked Angela the question "How long before you went to New York?". She responded with "How longa?". Fifty-five percent (55%) of these how questions are the chunk-learned question "How are you?". The questions "Howdaya feel?" and "How old are you?" are also learned phrases. In the last question how is also a type of an echo answer. I had asked Angela "Can you tell me how Anthony goes to work everyday?". The first answer she gave me was "What go to work everyday?". I repeated my question and the how question was given.

I do not feel that there is enough evidence to say that how is productively used as an interrogative word in Angela's language system. As was pointed out in previous sections, whadda, what and where are all used to express the meaning how. How is used primarily in chunk-learned phrases and is not really a part of Angela's interrogative system.

2.6 Who and When questions

Who and when questions are used infrequently. In the 4 who questions subject/verb inversion is not an issue since the interrogative is in the subject position.

Who told you?
Who leave her to go home?

In the two when questions there is neither do-support nor subject/verb inversion.

When he die?

2.7 Embedded questions

The whadda-what variation is found again in embedded questions. In 78% (15/19) of the embedded whadda questions the interrogative whadda conveyed the meaning what. Ten percent (10%) (2/19) of these questions expressed the meaning how. Ten percent (10%) (2/19) of the questions were used for why and where. In 90% of the questions the interrogative word whadda preceded a pronoun. This is comparable to the figure (96%) for the simple interrogatives.

In the embedded what questions we find what standing for how in 14% (2/14) of the sentences. What place substituted for where in one sentence. Fifty percent (50%) of the what interrogatives preceded subject pronouns. This figure is much larger

than that (0%) tabulated for simple interrogatives.

It appears, then, that with simple interrogatives whadda occurs exclusively before subject pronouns. In the embedded interrogatives there is free variation between whadda and what, although we usually find whadda preceding a pronoun.

I don't know whadda he say.
I don't know whadda you doone.
I don't know what he doone.
I don't know what happen to him.

Angela never uses if in embedded yes/no questions. The Italian translation of If, si, is used.

I don't know si win or not.

The Italian translation of how, come, is used in the one embedded how question.

I don't know come I gotta say thank you.

This use of the Italian equivalent for how is consistent with Angela's use of substitutes for the interrogative how.

3. Copula

3.1 Present Tense Copula

The first person copula am was correctly supplied 86% (24/28) of the time. It was omitted 11% (3/28) of the time. Was substituted for am once. Am was always present in its contracted form.

The second person singular copula are was used correctly only 18% (2/11) of the time. It was omitted 82% (9/11) of the time.

The third person copula is was supplied correctly 53% (63/119) of the time. It was omitted 23.5% (28/119) of the time. The Italian equivalent è was used 23.5% (28/119) of the time. The contracted form of the copula was used 84% (53/63) of the time. The contracted form is used only after the subject pronouns he and she. (Its is frequently omitted in Angela's speech.) The full copula is used only after nouns or in sentence initial position.

Monday is good.
More fast is more better.
Is so bad.

The plural copula are is not used. Angela rarely uses the pronouns we and they.

The copula is also used incorrectly.

She's remember
He's come round.
She's work.
She's wanna.

Here the present tense is marked by the contracted copula, not by the regular, third person morpheme, s. There are 12 sentences which make use of this construction.

3.2 Past Tense Copula

Angela used was consistently as the past tense copula. It was supplied correctly 100% (10/10) of the time for first person singular. For second person singular was substituted for were 100% (4/4) of the time. For third person singular Angela

used was correctly 93% (78/83) of the time. The Italian equivalent era was used 7% (5/83) of the time. For third person plural (we and you plural are not used) Angela used was 75% (3/4) of the time. Were was used once.

Was was used most frequently and was correct more often than any other verb. The saliency and frequency of this form of the verb be may have something to do with its high percentage of correct usage. The phonological difference between the present is and the past was may also account for the salience of the latter.

4. Past Tense

In my discussion of past tense verbs the verb tell is excluded. Due to Angela's accent, it is very difficult to determine whether she is using the present or past tense of tell. Negative sentences are also excluded.

Angela used no regular past tense verbs correctly. The unmarked form of the verb was always used.

I talk to him that day.
He die after.

Nine irregular past tense verbs were used correctly some percentage of the time. The verbs forgota (5/5), heard (5/5) and losta (1/1) were always used correctly. As can be seen, however, these verbs were not used often. The verbs saw and wrote were both used correctly 83% (5/6) of the time. Did was correctly supplied 33% (3/9) of the time, said 15% (3/20) of the time. Came was correctly supplied only once, after a model had been used. Caught was correct twice, but only after I had used it. The first time Angela used catcha. When Angela used these verbs incorrectly she provided the unmarked form. Context usually was used to denote that the past was being discussed. Time words and phrases, such as last year, the other day and yesterday, were also used.

5. Third Person S

Angela supplied the correct present tense ending only 20% (17/84) of the time. Knows was used correctly 100% (11/11) of the time. Wants was supplied correctly 50% (4/8) of the time. Goes (1/20) and says (1/45) were each used correctly only once. When these words were used incorrectly, the unmarked form was provided. Angela marked the present tense most frequently by context.

6. Possessive 'S

Angela marks the possessive in two ways. She either juxtaposes the two nouns or she directly translates from Italian. The former construction occurred 67% (4/6) of the time. The latter occurred 33% (2/6) of the time. When the two nouns are juxtaposed, the first noun is the possessor.

Nancy husband.
My sister house.

The direct translations from Italian take the form

The mother of the baby.
The father of the wife.

She does not use the possessive morpheme, 's, to mark possession.

Summary

I think that it is clear from this discussion of some of the aspects of Angela's language system that she has developed a very tight system of English. Her negatives are simply no V or, less frequently, can't V. Interrogatives are generally uninverted and without do-support. She productively uses the interrogatives whadda, what and why. Whadda is used as an overall interrogative and both what and whadda are used to convey the meaning how in certain circumstances. The use of what and whadda is restricted in simple wh-questions according to their environment.

The unmarked form of the verb is used most frequently. Certain irregular past tense verbs are used, notably was. Only certain verbs are inflected for the present tense. The third person copula is used correctly about 50% of the time. Context and certain time words and phrases indicate the time being discussed. Possession is marked most often in the simplest way possible, the juxtaposition of two nouns. The possessive morpheme, 's, is never used.

It is evident from the data that Angela's language has fossilized. It is also possible to say that her language has pidginized in the sense that it represents secondary hybridization. The position maintained here is that secondary hybridization (the interlanguage resulting from communication between second language learners and target language speakers) is legitimate pidginization. No claim is being made that Angela's interlanguage is a "true pidgin" or that it represents tertiary hybridization (the interlanguage resulting from communication between second language learners in the absence of target language speakers). (see Whinnom, 1971)

The reasons behind Angela's pidginization of English must now be explored. Schumann (1975, 1976, in press) discusses social and psychological distance as forces which cause a speaker's language to pidginize. It will be helpful to analyze the impact these forces had on Angela's speech when she first came to America and their impact in the last 15-20 years.

When Angela first arrived in America she lived in an all-Italian neighborhood. The people she came in contact with all spoke Italian. There was no pressing need for her to speak English. She knew that there was no question of her returning to Italy, since her husband was making a good living here. At the time of her arrival Italians were regarded, on the whole, as second class citizens. They had not yet become accepted into the mainstream of American society. Therefore, for these two reasons (ghettoized existence and "second class" status), we can say that Angela was socially distant from native English speakers. Psychological distance may also have been a factor in the pidginization of Angela's language. However, questions asked now concerning the way Angela felt during different periods of her life might elicit biased information. Angela now feels at ease in American society. She would probably find it difficult to recapture the feelings of forty years ago. At this point, then,

an accurate history of Angela's psychological distance profile cannot be made. Therefore, it is not possible to discuss psychological distance as a factor in her language development.

As the years went on the pressures of social distance diminished somewhat, but they did not disappear. Italians moved into American society and were gradually accepted as equals. Although Angela moved into an ethnically-mixed neighborhood, she still had predominantly Italian-speaking friends. When she needed to speak English, her children were there to help her out of any difficulties. There was never any real need for her to perfect her English, no real motivation.

This situation changed considerably when Angela moved to California sixteen years ago. She became involved with women's groups and senior citizens' groups. Most of the members of these clubs do not speak Italian. Her children do not belong to any of these clubs so there is no one to act as her go-between. Also, in her early years in the United States all new members of the family, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, were Italian. They spoke and understood Italian or at least understood it. Her grandchildren also understood it. This, too, has changed since her move to California. Her grandchildren have married or date non-Italians. Grandchildren who come to visit no longer understand her and she is forced to use English in order to communicate.

If Angela were now very proficient in English, we would argue that her move to California broke down social distance and left her more socially proximate to native English speakers. However, this is not the case. As we have seen, her English has fossilized at a very low level of development. On the surface, this fact argues against the pidginization hypothesis because that hypothesis predicts that when social distance is removed development in the second language should occur. Then the question is why hasn't Angela's English developed. One explanation is that the pidginization hypothesis is wrong and social distance is not the controlling variable in her second language acquisition. On the other hand, it may be the case that Angela's social distance did not, in fact, radically change with her move to California. Even though she now has more contact with English speaking people, the topics which she discusses in English are limited. They concern fairly routine matters such as family, friends, church, T.V. programs. In addition, within the family, she is under no pressure by other family members to improve her performance. The family does not expect her to improve her English. They make the effort to understand the English she speaks.

We have no idea if Angela's English has improved since her move to California and since she has begun to be socially closer to American society. We have no records of her speech from thirty years ago. This fall Angela will have begun ESL classes due to the fact that the class is being taught by her granddaughter. It will be interesting to see if her English becomes less pidginized. Only time will tell if instruction will be enough to break down her tight, linguistic system.

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